

MULTI-LAYERED WOVEN SCRIM

Field of the Invention

5 The invention pertains to scrims made of woven thermoplastic tapes, and more particularly, to multiple-layer scrims having high tensile and tear strengths and suitable for industrial use.

Background of the Invention

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It is known in the field of industrial strength fabrics to make a woven scrim from thermoplastic tapes. Such tapes, commonly made of polyolefins such as high density polyethylene, stretched in the course of manufacture, are flexible, weavable and have high tensile strength.

15 Scrims woven of such tapes have substantial mechanical strength and are used as a structural element of industrial fabrics such as tarpaulins, building covers, wrapping materials for industrial goods, and for similar uses. The strength of such scrims is limited by the number of tapes per unit area that can be woven together and the tensile strength of the
20 individual tapes.

To produce higher strength scrims it is known to attach two or more layers together, typically by laminating or stitching. There are problems with both of these prior art methods that reduce the strength of
25 the product. When laminating is carried out, due to the thickness of the scrims, it is difficult to cool down or temper the laminating layer, and consequently the scrim may be damaged by excessive heat, reducing its tensile strength. Alternatively, if scrim layers are stitched and sewn together, the stitches tend to create tears and splitting of the tapes and
30 hence reduce tensile strength.

United States Patent 6,367,513 (Cain) discloses a strengthened scrim comprising a plain weave scrim wherein the warp and wefts ends

comprise two or more superimposed tapes. However, when folded, the scrim may bend at the edges of the superimposed tapes, which, for a coated scrim, may result in cracking of the coating at the bends. Further, where more than two tapes are placed one on top of the other, 5 difficulties arise in controlling the tension of the tapes in the middle and in adjusting the pick count according to the thickness of the ends, the number of superimposed tapes determining thickness of each end.

It is therefore desirable to provide a scrim that is woven in a 10 multi-layer structure and wherein the aforementioned limitations are overcome, without reducing the strength of each layer and while avoiding additional processes such as laminating or sewing together of the layers, or process sophistications such as tension control in superimposing tapes.

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Summary of Invention

It is an object of the invention to provide a high performance multi-layer scrim, wherein each layer is attached to the next one at 20 points along the width, or length, or in both directions, while maintaining the integrity of each layer.

It is a further object of the invention to provide a multilayer scrim wherein one or more layers may, if desired, have tapes with particular 25 chemical properties, such as those imparted by UV stabilizers and fire retardants, or particular physical properties such as those imparted by colour pigments.

It is a further object of the invention to provide a multi-layer 30 scrim that is wrinkle-free and wherein the salvage is shared between layers to avoid slippage of layers.

The present invention provides a multi-layer scrim for use in heavy-duty wraps, construction fabrics and covers, wherein characteristics such as tensile strength and tear strength in both the machine and the cross-machine directions, flexibility, flatness, or stability are important.

The invention provides a scrim comprising two or more layers, each layer comprising woven tapes that are mutually perpendicular (i.e. warp and weft tapes) wherein a layer-connecting tape, such a warp tape, is interwoven with mutually perpendicular tapes (such as the weft tapes) of both layers so as to attach the layers together. The attachment can be at selected points or intervals, or along lines of attachment, such lines of attachment being in the machine direction or the cross-machine direction.

The invention further provides a method for making a multi-layer scrim as aforesaid, comprising weaving tapes to form two or more layers and, simultaneously, weaving a layer-connecting tape, such as a warp tape, with mutually perpendicular tapes of adjacent layers, whereby adjacent layers are attached together to form the scrim.

The invention further provides industrial fabrics which comprise a multi-layer scrim according to the invention which is coated or laminated to a film, or to a layer of slip-resistant material, or to other substrates that may be suitable for a particular end use of the fabric.

Brief Description of Drawings

Figure 1 is a schematic plan view of a portion of a two-layer scrim according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

Figure 2 is a schematic cross-sectional view taken along the line 2 - 2 of Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a schematic cross-sectional view of a three-layer scrim
5 according to the invention.

Description of the Preferred Embodiments

10 The warp and weft tapes that are the structural elements of the
15 scrims of the invention are thermoplastic tapes of a size and strength
suitable for the manufacture of industrial strength scrims. In this
specification, "tape" means a flexible, weavable, elongated member
with a generally rectangular cross-section, having a width at least ten
times larger than its thickness. The width of the tapes is preferably in
the range of one to ten millimeters. The thickness of the tapes is prefer-
ably in the range of 0.02 to 0.1 mm. The weight of the tapes (measured
as decitex, i.e. weight in grams per 10,000 meters in length) is prefera-
bly in the range of 500 to 3,000. The tapes can be made by slitting
20 cast-extruded thermoplastic film into strands and stretching them from
three to five times their original length to increase tensile strength and
reduce stretch of the scrim. The tapes are preferably made of polyolefin
material, such as high density polyethylene or polypropylene. Such
tapes are flexible, weavable and have high tensile strength.

25 The tapes for use in the invention can contain one or more of
various additives, to impart properties to the scrim that are useful for
particular applications. For example, they may contain colour pig-
ments, such as black pigment, to increase the resistance of the scrim to
UV radiation, or pigments or compositions to increase reflectivity, UV-
30 resistant compositions, flame-retardant compositions, mold inhibitors,
metal corrosion inhibitors, etc.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate an embodiment of a two-layer scrim according to the present invention, in which two woven layers are attached together by means of interweaving a layer-connecting warp tape with weft tapes of both layers.

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Figure 1 is a plan view which, for purposes of illustration, shows both layers of scrim 9, but it will be understood that, in practice, when the tapes are tightly woven, the tapes of one layer are generally on top of those of the other layer. Scrim 9 comprises two layers, 60 and 61, attached together by means of layer-connecting tapes 40, 50. Layer 60 comprises warp tapes 1, 2, 5 and 6 interwoven with weft tapes 12, 13, 16, 17, 20, 21, 24, 25, 28, 29, 32 and 33 in a plain weave. Layer 61 comprises warp tapes 3, 4, 7 and 8, interwoven with weft tapes 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23, 26, 27, 30 and 31 in a plain weave. It will be understood that the portion of the weave pattern shown in Figure 1, from warp tape 1 to 8 and weft tape 10 to 33, is repeated to form a scrim of the desired size.

Preferably, both layers are plain weave, but, if desired, other weave patterns may be employed.

Layer-connecting tapes 40, 50 are woven parallel to the warp tapes, at selected spaced intervals (here, after every twelfth warp tape) and are interwoven with selected weft tapes so as to connect the two layers. In the example illustrated in the drawings, layer-connecting tape 40 is woven under weft tapes 4 and 8 of layer 61 and over the other weft tapes; and layer-connecting tape 50 is woven over weft tapes 2 and 6 of layer of 60 and over the other weft tapes.

It will be understood that the layer-connecting tapes can be woven in various patterns other than according to the specific pattern shown in

the drawings and still attach the two layers together effectively. For example, layer-connecting tape 40 could be woven under weft tapes 3 and 7 and over the other weft tapes.

5 Preferably, a layer-connecting tape 40, 50 is provided at selected intervals, for example, every twelfth warp tape, or other selected interval, in order to attach the two layers 60, 61 together as firmly as required. This results in a set of spaced, parallel lines of attachment between the two layers. The frequency and location of the layer-con-
10 necting tapes can be selected according to the physical requirements of the scrim and the design of the loom. The shared salvage provides stability and stops the layers from sliding relative to each other in the course of manufacture and during any subsequent processing such as coating.

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In a two-layer scrim, as in Figure 1, it is preferred that the layer-connecting tapes be spaced apart from each other by a number of warp tapes that is a multiple of four, for example 12, 16, 20, etc., to provide for orderly interweaving of weft tapes.

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If desired, more than one layer-connecting tape, for example a pair of such tapes, may be placed side by side (or one on top of the other) and used to connect the layers. Each line of attachment would therefore comprise the plurality of grouped, layer-connecting tapes,
25 rather than a single tape as in the embodiment of Figures 1 and 2.

The scrim of the invention can comprise any number of layers that can be practically woven on a selected loom. A scrim having a desired tensile and tear strength can be achieved by making it with a
30 sufficient number of layers. Multiple beams can be employed on a loom

in order to make a multi-layer scrim of a width greater than could otherwise be formed on the loom.

For a three-layer scrim according to the invention, a third woven
5 layer, comprising warp and weft tapes, is attached by means of a layer-
connecting tape that connects the third layer to the layer to which it is
adjacent. Referring to Figure 3, which shows a three-layer scrim 90,
layers 60 and 61 are structurally similar to the correspondingly num-
bered layers in the two-layer scrim of Figure 2. Layer 62, comprising
10 weft tapes 63, 64 and warp tapes 65 to 72, is attached to layer 60 by
means of layer-connecting tape 80. Additional spaced-apart layer-
connecting tapes (not shown), parallel to tape 80 are used to attach layer
62 to layer 60. It will be noted that the middle layer 60 is attached to
each of the two outer layers 61 and 62, but such outer layers are not
15 attached directly to each other.

In a multi-layer scrim of three or more layers, it is preferred that
adjacent layer-connecting tapes that connect any given two adjacent
layers be spaced apart by a number of parallel woven tapes (e.g. warp
20 tapes in the embodiment of Figure 3) that is a multiple of four, for
example 12, 16, 20, etc.

The principles that apply to a three-layer scrim also apply to scrims of
four or more layers, all of which are within the scope of the invention.
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As described above, and is illustrated in the drawings, the layers
of the scrims are connected by means of layer-connecting tapes interwo-
ven with weft tapes of the layers, forming longitudinal (machine direc-
tion) lines of attachment. However, it is within the scope of the inven-
30 tion for the attachment to be made by means of layer-connecting tapes
that are parallel to the weft tapes and interweave with the warp tapes of

the layers, so as to form transverse (cross-machine direction) lines of attachment between the layers. It is also within the scope of the invention for both modes of attachment to be employed at the same time, resulting in a scrim having both longitudinal and transverse lines of attachment between the layers, forming a quilted multi-layer fabric.

It will be apparent to a person skilled in the art from the foregoing description, and in particular from Figure 1, that the scrim of the invention is woven as a unit; in other words, by selection of the pattern of interweaving of the warp and weft tapes and the layer-connecting tapes on the loom, both layers of the scrim, and their connection by means of the layer-connecting tapes, are formed together on the loom by one weaving operation. The scrim is not made, according to the preferred embodiment, by forming the layers separately and then, subsequently, connecting them together.

In the scrims of the invention, each layer can be designed to provide different physical, mechanical or chemical properties, such as colour, UV stability, fire retardant, mold inhibition and metal corrosion inhibition. This is accomplished by appropriately selecting the tapes that will form each layer. The warp and weft tapes that will form a particular layer can be ones having specific properties, and the warp and weft tapes that will form another layer can have different properties. For example, the tapes forming the layer that will be an inner layer when the scrim is used in a metal wrapping fabric may include a metal corrosion inhibitor, while the outer layer may include a pigment.

Scrims of the invention can be laminated on one or both sides with thermoplastic films, using conventional laminating processes, to produce waterproof fabrics suitable for use as industrial fabrics, construction fabrics, building covers, tarpaulins, landfill covers, agricul-

tural fabrics (such as hay tarps), wrapping materials and for other industrial and agricultural applications.

5 The film to which the scrim is laminated preferably comprises polyolefin resin, such as polyethylene or polypropylene, and may include optional additives such as UV-resistant compositions and flame-retardant compositions.

10 The scrims of the invention may also be used as the structural substrate for a wide range of laminated products, in the same manner as prior art multi-layer scrims are used, but bringing the advantages of a superior scrim, as described above. For example, they may be laminated on one or both sides to a layer of slip-resistant material, or to a layer of water-absorbent material, such as paper or non-woven thermo-
15 plastic mats. Such laminated products can be used as industrial and agricultural fabrics for a variety of purposes, including those described above. Uncoated or unlaminated scrim according to the invention can also be used for a variety of applications, such as industrial fabrics, construction fabrics, landfill covers, etc.

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Example

A tape made of high density polyethylene 3.3 mm wide and 48 micrometers thick, having a decitex of 1705 was woven into a multi-
25 layer scrim according to the invention having a pick count of 16 x 16 and an average weight of 215 grams per square meter on a Sulzer (trademark) weaving machine. The warp, weft and layer-connecting tapes were interwoven according to the pattern shown in Figure 1. The resulting two-layer scrim, having parallel lines of attachment in the
30 machine direction by the layer-connecting tapes, was flat and flexible, with good tensile and tear strength.